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HUMAN LIFE A PILGRIMAGE

OR

THE CHRISTIAN A STRANGER AND  
SOJOURNER UPON EARTH :

A

S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE  
HON. RICHARD PENN, ESQ;

ONE OF THE PROPRIETARIES OF THE PROVINCE  
OF PENNSYLVANIA :

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNITED CONGREGATIONS OF  
CHRIST CHURCH AND ST. PETER'S, IN THE CITY  
OF PHILADELPHIA, ON SUNDAY, APRIL XXI. 1771.

BY THE REVEREND

JACOB DUCHÉ, M. A.

PHILADELPHIA :

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TO THE HONOURABLE

THOMAS PENN,

AND

JOHN PENN, ESQUIRES,

TRUE AND ABSOLUTE PROPRIETARIES OF THE  
PROVINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA, AND COUNTIES  
OF NEW-CASTLE, KENT, AND SUSSEX,  
ON DELAWARE :

AND TO THE HONOURABLE

RICHARD PENN, ESQ;

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF THE SAID PROVINCE  
AND COUNTIES :

THIS SERMON

IS MOST HUMBLY AND AFFECTION-  
ATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.



# P R E F A C E.

*THE indisposition of our worthy RECTOR having prevented him from paying that tribute of respect to the memory of our deceased PROPRIETARY, which his affection would have prompted him to do; this duty, by his appointment, devolved upon me.*

*AND as his Honour the GOVERNOR \* was pleased particularly to request the publication of what I delivered upon that occasion, I now send it forth with my sincere wishes and prayers, that the important truths, which I have there humbly attempted to recommend and enforce, may, by the divine blessing, administer to the instruction and consolation of every reader.*

*THE Honourable RICHARD PENN, Esquire, departed this life, at his house in Cavendish-Square, Westminster, on the 29th Day of January, 1771, aged 67 Years.*

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P S A L M

\* The Honourable JOHN PENN, Esq;



## P S A L M X X X I X.

Part of the twelfth Verse.

FOR I AM A STRANGER WITH THEE,  
AND A SOJOURNER, AS ALL MY FA-  
THERS WERE.

IN every age of the world, and among people of every nation and language under heaven, (if we may credit the testimony of history and experience) there have been found many virtuous, thoughtful and enquiring minds; who, from an attentive observation of the moral as well as physical disorders incident to the present system of things, from a personal experience of the unavoidable miseries consequent thereupon, and from a secret irresistible desire and longing after some superior but unknown state of being, have been led to form these most philosophical and pious conclusions, viz.

THAT their present mode of existence could not possibly be the same, for which they were originally intended by a being of infinite wisdom, goodness and love; that the intelligent and immortal spirit within them could not have been created merely

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to animate a dark terrestrial body, and to be subject to the clamorous demands of animal nature; that the fair signatures of beauty, order and love, which they still saw, and felt, and admired, within and without them, could not have been impressed by the divine **FIAT** upon that mixture of darkness, deformity and confusion, in which they now appear; that the primæval harmony and lustre of the creation must by some means or other have been marred and spoiled; and that, for these reasons, they could not but consider themselves as the fallen inhabitants of a fallen world.

**T H A T** these strange disorders must have proceeded solely from the depravity of some created intelligences, they concluded, not only from their own conceptions of the spotless purity and goodness of the divine nature, but from their own observation and experience of the innumerable evils that were produced in themselves and others, whenever their wills and affections deviated from the strait paths of virtue, and wandered in the mazes of vice. And yet they saw---and yet they felt---that so numerous and powerful were the temptations and suggestions on the side of vice, that nought but the kind interposition  
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of their good and powerful CREATOR, nought but the supernatural illumination and direction of his BLESSED SPIRIT, could rescue them from the dominion of their passions, open their understandings to the sight of TRUTH, and incline their wills to the pursuit and practice of GOODNESS. This affectionate intercourse with their CREATOR, they considered as the only source of their virtue and happiness in this life, as the only earnest of their future and final felicity in the next. Hence they regarded themselves as strangers and exiles in a foreign land, and looked upon death as the season of their deliverance, of their return to their native country, and re-union with their father and kindred spirits in glory.

MANY traces of this sublime philosophy do we meet with in the lives and writings of the virtuous heathen. For, however they may differ from us in their modes of conception and expression, a discerning mind will soon discover, that their feelings were congenial with our own; and that they wanted but the aids of external revelation to enable them to "speak what they knew, and testify what they saw," in the same language which we are instructed to use.



THE sacred writings, however, afford us the noblest and most indubitable testimonies to the great truths mentioned above. For whatsoever scattered Rays of knowledge or of goodness are found here and there gleaming through the shades of paganism; ---- whatsoever the thrice-great HERMES delivered as oracles from his sacred tripos; --- whatsoever a PYTHAGORAS, a SOCRATES, an EPICTETUS, a ZOROASTER, or a CONFUCIUS, have laboured to inculcate upon the hearts of their disciples --- all this, and infinitely more, without any corrupt or superstitious mixture, do we find expressly revealed, with all the marks of divine authority, in the holy scriptures --- all this, and infinitely more, do we find beautifully exemplified in those lives and sayings of patriarchs, prophets and apostles, which are recorded for our instruction and imitation in the Old Testament as well as in the New.

THESE venerable teachers and patterns of truth and virtue do all, with one voice, express their deep sensibility of the evils and miseries of their present state of existence, and their ardent aspirations after another and a better state. They all with one voice acknowledge the vanity and insufficiency of every sublunary enjoyment,  
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and the indispensable necessity of " setting the affections on things above, not on things on the earth." They all with one voice pronounce their state in this world to be that of strangers or exiles, and consider their temporary pilgrimage here as only intended to purify and prepare them for a state of eternal peace and happiness hereafter. In a word, they all with one voice declare, that there is no other method, by which they can be redeemed from the evils of their present life, and qualified for the blessings of a future, but by a perpetual communion with the GREAT FATHER OF THEIR SPIRITS, kept up on his part by kind and liberal effusions of his own essential goodness; and on theirs, by an affectionate and ardent inclination of their wills and desires towards him, and a grateful reception, and faithful improvement of his loving communications.

UNDER the Old Testament, this blessed intercourse was understood and felt by patriarchs and prophets through the outward means of sacrifices, types, and various ceremonies and ordinances, all predictive and expressive of a certain redeeming process, which, " in the fullness of time," was to be accomplished for human nature, in the person of a suffering and triumphant MESSIAH.

**MESSIAH.** Under the New Testament, it broke forth, with meridian lustre, in the incarnation and nativity, life and conversation, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of the BLESSED JESUS; in whose sacred person the divine and human natures were most happily united, to the end, that as the SON OF MAN and SON OF GOD, he might communicate to every SON OF MAN, that should receive his testimony, and believe in his Name, the power of becoming a SON OF GOD \*.

His life and conversation upon earth must, therefore, be the true and only standard, by which ours is to be regulated. As he lived, so should we live also; and consider this world in the same point of view, and treat it in the same manner that he did.

So far, indeed, as the worthies of the Old Testament have lived or spoken according to the spirit of his gospel, so far, without doubt, we are bound to follow their example: And a very little acquaintance with scripture will be sufficient to inform us, that “ they did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink,” and had all entered upon

\* St. John i. 12.



upon the same redeeming process, with those, who have since lived under the light of the gospel, and have known and found this meat and drink to be no other than those spiritual emanations of truth and love, which we all receive, or may receive, from CHRIST OUR COMMON SAVIOUR.

WHEN DAVID, therefore, confessed, that he was “ a stranger and sojourner with God, as all his fathers were,” what was this, but an express declaration, that, though he was encircled with a Diadem, and clad in the robes of royalty; though he had his residence in the metropolis of Judea, and exercised an absolute sovereignty over the whole realm, he considered himself, nevertheless, as a stranger in a strange land, far distant from his native country, surrounded by a multitude of enemies, who were perpetually upon the watch to take advantage of any little mistake he might commit, perpetually in arms against him, and determined, if they possibly could, to rob him at once of his kingdom and his peace. What was it but an humble acknowledgment of his own spiritually helpless and indigent condition? and at the same time an affectionate intimation of his secret hope, that, as his forefathers

forefathers had been in the same circumstances he was now in, and had experienced the kind interposition of heaven for their relief and comfort, God would be graciously pleased to continue to him the same loving-kindness, accompany, support and protect him through his painful sojourn, and conduct him safe to those blessed abodes, which he had prepared for the reception of every true spiritual Israelite. "For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."

UPON this view of things, and under the influence of these principles, he composed the pathetic psalm, from whence my text is taken; which exhibits to us a lively representation of the vanity and shortness of human life, the difficulties, which attend our pilgrimage through this world, the prudence and circumspection, which the pilgrim must observe, the enemies he must expect to encounter on the way, and the confidence he must repose in the strength of a superior and almighty arm, in order to secure to himself Success and Victory.

THE truth of this representation we find abundantly confirmed by the whole tenor of scripture. The grand apostate  
seraph

seraph is there called "THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD, THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR," from which, and other expressions of the like import, we may justly conclude, that he was once in possession of this very system which we inhabit---"Twas the sphere of glory, in which he moved, whilst his lustre yet remained unfaded. Envious, jealous of its new inhabitants, he is perpetually "walking about, seeking whom he may devour." He avails himself of that earthly nature, which we inherit from our fallen ancestor, insinuates himself through its foul channels into our inmost hearts, seduces us from the steps of innocence and virtue, and, unless timely rescued by a superior power, will hurry us headlong into the depths of his own dark and fiery kingdom.

ON the other hand, the GOD of LIGHT and LOVE, who reigns supreme in his own KINGDOM of LIGHT and LOVE, is most affectionately anxious for our preservation. For this gracious purpose, he causes his light to shine forth in the midst of our darkness; discovers to us the secret hostile intentions of our malicious Enemy; calls upon us to fly from his infernal wiles, and invites us to walk with himself in his own delightful element, with sweet assur-

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ances of peace and consolation here, and glory, honour and immortality hereafter.

ILL fares the man, whose mistaken heart too easily opens to the false friendship of his flattering foe---He walks upon enchanted ground---There is no reality in the surrounding scene---Every object is visionary---The flowers have no real fragrance---the fruits no real flavour or nourishment.---He plucks and eats---but still remains unsatisfied---He plucks and eats again---He discovers the delusion---and yet the delusion pleases him.---The wily enchanter leads him at one time into the gardens of PLEASURE---at another, conducts him to the pompous edifice of AMBITION---at another, opens upon his ravished sight the splendid treasures, which MAMMON offers to his foolish votaries.---With this pretended friend and guardian he walks the tiresome round---pleased and transported with every new prospect---but loathing the objects as soon as possessed. In the mean while, the calls of a superior nature are totally disregarded, and the soul is suffered to famish within the pampered body.

NOR so the wise and virtuous candidate for sublimer joys. His breast is no sooner penetrated

penetrated by a ray of that universal light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," than it opens with cheerfulness and gratitude, to receive more and more of the salutary effulgence. He finds within himself a source of sensibilities, which correspond to a world of objects far more real and sublime, than aught that meets his outward senses in this shadowy scene. He finds---he feels the presence of a true friend and guardian, whose unlimited power can controul the open or secret attacks of his false friend and seducer; whose wisdom can furnish him with every kind of knowledge, that is necessary to his real felicity; and whose ineffable love is perpetually feeding and refreshing the angel, that is within him, with such fruits and flowers as are of celestial growth, and suited to its celestial frame. With this guardian God, he walks the wilds of nature, unappalled---regardless alike of the smiles and frowns of his spiritual adversaries. He considers himself as a stranger and sojourner in this vale of misery; and, under the conduct of unerring wisdom, and almighty love, pursues his painful pleasing journey to a better country, even an heavenly one.

BUT this is not all. Care, prudence, circumspection and confidence in God, are not only indispensibly necessary to secure to us a safe and happy pilgrimage through life; but they are likewise the best, the only preparatives for an happy and comfortable death.

As strangers and sojourners, we ought to live under a constant expectation of being called home to our native country. This expectation will be either pleasing or painful, according as we are more or less prepared for the awful summons. The summons we cannot dispense with. The time in which it may be pronounced is altogether uncertain.

SOME of us, within a very few years, and some, perhaps, within a very few days, may behold the curtain drop, and shut out every scene of temporal nature from our view. With respect to us, "the heavens and the earth will then pass away with a mighty noise; the sun will be darkened, and the moon turned into blood; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken." Death, judgment, heaven or hell will then be realized to our disembodied spirits. "He that is holy will be holy still, and he that  
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is filthy will be filthy still." The dissolution of this outward body will close the season of divine grace; the hopes or the fears, the happiness or the misery of man, will be determined by his expiring breath; and his God will be manifested to him, either in the mild majesty of his love, or in the consuming fire of his wrath.

WHAT adds to the solemnity of this dread moment is the frequent suddenness of its approach. The king of terrors often knocks at the door, when the master of the house is by no means prepared for the awful visit. Nay, he frequently passes by the habitations of age, infirmity and distress, and thunders forth his tremendous summons in the ears of the young, the gay and the robust. Neither superior fortune, nor superior station, can protract the fleeting date of life. The monarch tumbles from his throne; and, after the momentary honours of a pompous funeral, makes his bed in the dust, and lies there as poor and undistinguished as the late tenant of the homely cottage. Even piety and virtue cannot screen their votaries from death's unerring shaft; but he is sometimes permitted to snatch away the most amiable patterns of both, in order to awaken the attention,

attention, or chastise the carelessness, of their friends and neighbours.

HAPPY would it be for mankind, if these frequent indiscriminate strokes did but produce a more general and serious attention to "the things that belong to their peace:" And happy for you, my dear brethren, if the solemn truths, that have now been delivered, are permitted to have a due weight and influence on your lives and practice.

EXAMINE yourselves, then, by these principles. Look well into the present state of your souls. Be these important reflections continually present to your minds; that you are but strangers and sojourners upon earth; that every object, which attracts and engages your desires and affections here, must very shortly be removed from you for ever; that 'tis folly and madness to take up your rest in such poor perishable things, as the present world affords, inasmuch as death must soon put an end to their shadowy forms, and translate you to a world, where all is real---all is eternal.

Do not deceive yourselves. A gay and thoughtless life is no suitable preparation  
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for death. The heart must be gradually estranged from the vanities of time, before it can turn its desires towards the riches of eternity. You have heard of the difficulties you may expect to meet with, of the enemies you will have to encounter on your way to heaven. Up, then, and be doing. No time is to be lost. Every moment is precious. It carries heaven on its wing\*. The victory is secure, if you will but arm yourselves for the conflict. Your heavenly FATHER is perpetually drawing and inviting you to enter the lists, and contend for the prize. His eternal SON hath promised to be with you, and in you. And the blessed SPIRIT, proceeding from both, will inspire you with all that celestial strength and ardour, which alone can render you more than conquerors. Thus are you furnished, from the armoury of heaven, with a divine panoply, which, upon trial, you will find impenetrable to "all the fiery darts of the wicked."

"FEAR not, then, thou worm, Jacob! Be not dismayed---for thy God is with thee!" Blessed encouragement this! What though you are strangers and sojourners upon earth, yet remember for your consolation, that you are strangers and sojourn-

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\* Dr. Young's Night Thoughts,



ers with God. "For I am a stranger and sojourner WITH THEE."

O MY dear brethren! What ineffable peace and satisfaction would spring up in your hearts, could you once realize to yourselves, could you once feel, the perpetual presence of an OMNIPOTENT GOD, travelling with you on the journey of life, supplying all your wants, supporting you under all your difficulties and distresses, and, with the affectionate fondness of a father, minutely entering into all your real interests and concerns. To know, that you are his offspring, fallen indeed, but redeemed by his blessed SON, that his love for you is so ardent, that "whoso toucheth you his children toucheth the apple of his eye; that in all your afflictions he is afflicted, and that the angel of his presence saves and delivers you; that he will never leave you comfortless, but will be with you always, even to the end of the world;" these are such sweet and delightful assurances, as you could never have collected from the vain reasonings of worldly philosophy, or the vain confidence, which many pretend to derive from mere unassisted human virtue.

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UPON this ground you may rest secure; and, in the strength of an almighty arm, bid defiance to the open assaults or secret stratagems of the enemies of your peace. Whilst the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS continues to impart his chearing beams, and fountains of living water spring up on every side, to refresh the weary pilgrim, you may pursue your journey, with peace and confidence, through the VALLEY of BACA---you may "lift up your heads with joy, as the ransomed of the LORD," and "proceed from strength to strength, till you appear before the GOD of GODS in SION."

AND now, my dear Brethren, permit me to direct your thoughts, for a few moments, to the occasion of the present solemnity. 'Tis intended as a decent and respectful tribute to the memory of the HONOURABLE RICHARD PENN, Esq; one of the Proprietaries of this province, lately deceased.

As to the public character of this GENTLEMAN, you must all have heard, that he chearfully united with his worthy BROTHER, in the many noble and generous donations, which they have made from time to time, for the ornament as well as

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improvement of this city and province. The college, the hospital, the house of employment, the public library, our own churches, as well as those of other denominations, together with many institutions of a more private nature, have been distinguished by their benevolence---and in most of these, you will find their names foremost on the list of contributors.

I HAD not the honour of being particularly acquainted with the deceased: But, with respect to his private character, his friends, with whom I have conversed, seem to concur in this uniform testimony; that he loved retirement, was an enemy to all parade and ostentation, and contented himself with the calm satisfaction of domestic life.

HE was afflicted, it seems, with a constitution, liable to frequent indispositions. In these, I am told, he was patient and composed, and bore them all with great equanimity and firmness of spirit. Even in his last moments, when, under the excruciating pains of a most violent malady, I have heard, that he preserved the same fortitude and resignation in which he had lived.

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So that, from this joint testimony of his friends and acquaintance, we may naturally conclude, that, like the Psalmist in my text, he considered himself as “a stranger and sojourner” upon earth, not at his own disposal, but subject to the calls and appointments of his God.

I CANNOT, therefore, better conclude this discourse, nor more for the edification of every one present, than by drawing from this example of patience and equanimity the same practical lesson, which our Blessed LORD drew from the distinguished charity of the good Samaritan;

GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.

The E N D.

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